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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 000308

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TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: COUNSELOR COHEN DISCUSSES AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN  
DURING MAY 14-15 TRIP TO NATO

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Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. During separate May 14 meetings at NATO HQ with Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and NATO Permanent Representatives, Counselor Cohen discussed NATO's role in Afghanistan, as well as general challenges in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the need to address them in an integrated manner. The Counselor shared his observations from recently completed trips to Pakistan and Afghanistan, noting the challenges of bringing development and security to Pakistan's tribal areas and building rule of law and governance in Afghanistan. He highlighted the key role security and military operations play in enabling development and cited U.S. efforts in Nuristan province in Afghanistan as a positive example. Dr. Cohen told interlocutors the international community needed to enhance training efforts for Afghan security forces and address Afghanistan's narcotics problem more effectively. He also said he had concerns with command and control (C2) structures in Afghanistan. SYG de Hoop Scheffer agreed on the need for NATO to increase its training efforts with Afghan security forces, and addressed the need to better coordinate strategic messaging among ISAF, OEF, and the Afghan government. NATO PermReps probed for the Counselor's views on a variety of fronts, focusing on how to enhance Pakistani efforts on the Afghan border, and ISAF-OEF coordination. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) SYG de Hoop Scheffer opened with three main points on Afghanistan. First, President Karzai needed to exercise restraint in criticizing international forces publicly, recognizing that NATO is doing all it can to prevent civilian casualties. Next, NATO must increase its role in training Afghan security forces, but lack of training should not become a catch-all excuse for all that is wrong in the country. Third, NATO has work to do on improving its strategic messaging in conjunction with OEF and the Afghan government, while understanding the political reality that

the same message resonates differently for each Ally due to domestic politics. The SYG urged that existing coordination and messaging structures be examined, and modified appropriately to enhance efforts. He also briefed the Counselor on NATO's efforts implementing a "Comprehensive Approach" in Afghanistan, in other words, working seamlessly with other international actors involved in country. NATO must do its part, the SYG noted, but only had a piece of the puzzle: the G-8, UN, and EU must also do more to enhance the overall international effort.

13. (C) The Counselor noted he had found Karzai emotional during his recent meeting, and intensely concerned with Pakistan. He stated that both Presidents Karzai and Musharraf need to be helped and prodded simultaneously by the international community. He addressed the need to train Afghan security forces, and for urgent progress particularly within the Afghan National Police, which according to Major General Durbin (CSTC-A), needed 2,400 additional trainers and mentors. The mentors would both advise ANP in the field and also monitor their performance and keep them on good behavior. He agreed organizational fixes could be made to current strategic communications arrangements in theater, but noted that local commanders would, in many cases, have to take the lead. The Counselor, Ambassador Nuland, and the SYG discussed the possibility of a three-pronged media arrangement in theater, whereby ISAF, OEF, and the Afghans would coordinate messages, share information, and respond appropriately to questions concerning complex, pan-theater operations. The SYG expressed interest, and noted that discipline would be key; once a line was decided, all entities would need to fall in and support it. ISAF should not take questions that should be addressed to OEF, and vice-versa.

14. (C) In a separate meeting with Allied Ambassadors, the  
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Counselor shared observations from his time in Pakistan and Afghanistan. He believed the war in Afghanistan was winnable, a theme he had heard from many interlocutors during his recent visit, though the challenges were significant. He urged that nations' policies towards Pakistan and Afghanistan be pursued in an integrated manner, reflecting the nature of the problem. Cooperation between the two nations should be encouraged, but just as the Afghans needed assistance with training and capabilities, the Pakistani Frontier Corps was woefully under-equipped. He suggested that nations begin to look differently at Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, stating the PRTs should see their job as strategic development rather than reconstruction. An equal, and in some ways more important, challenge was governance and rule of law, and much work remained on those fronts.

15. (C) Dr. Cohen highlighted the crucial link between military operations and development: they could not be separated cleanly, and cited U.S. civil and military efforts in Nuristan province as an excellent example of how to combine robust military efforts with development in an effective counterinsurgency strategy. He urged Allies to address the gap in credibility and capability between the Afghan National Army and Police and to do more police training, including mentoring. The Counselor pointed to the strategic challenge of counternarcotics, noting the links between the drug trade, corruption, and funding of the insurgency. The problem would only grow worse if not addressed more effectively, he stated. Finally, he shared his concern with PermReps that while understanding the ISAF and OEF current C2 structure resulted from multilateral compromises, its unwieldy nature could be improved.

16. (C) During discussion with PermReps, Greece, Poland, and Italy focused on how to make more progress on Pakistan-Afghanistan border issues. The Spanish ambassador, supported by Norway, stressed his belief that ISAF and OEF needed to coordinate operations and messaging better, noting

the sensitivities of many Allied publics and parliaments to casualties - particularly civilian - in Afghanistan. Addressing the issue of ISAF C2 and civilian casualties, the UK ambassador stated that ISAF and OEF needed a joint toolkit to respond publicly to incidents when they occur, however regrettable they are. In reply to the Spanish ambassador, he stressed that nobody should call into question the guarantee of in extremis ISAF support to Coalition forces in need, and vice-versa.

¶17. (C) On Pakistan, the Counselor responded that addressing border challenges would be a long-term effort, requiring economic and military aid to both Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as more political and military coordination between both nations. The international community should support Pakistan in its efforts to bring its North West Frontier Province -- in particular the Federally Administered Tribal Areas -- into "Pakistan proper." In response to the points by the Spanish and Norwegian ambassadors, the Counselor acknowledged coordination and synergy should be improved, but pushed back, noting that in war, in extremis situations arise despite the best of planning and coordination, and that European governments must begin to acknowledge that NATO must fight in Afghanistan, as part and parcel of fulfilling ISAF's mandate to bring security and stability to the country. More importantly, they must explain these realities to their publics.

¶18. (U) Counselor Cohen has cleared this message.  
NULAND